

The True  
 State of Christianity  
 IN  
 ENGLAND,  
 And of it's  
 Decay & Danger  
 FROM  
 SECTARIES  
 As well as  
 PAPISTS.

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A  
 REPRESENTATION  
 OF THE  
 State of Christianity  
 I N  
 ENGLAND, &c.



HOEVER reflects upon the Age that  
 went immediately before us, and com-  
 pares that Divine and Gracious temper of  
 Soul that was in our Ancestors, with that  
 perfidious, profligate and Atheistical Spi-  
 rit that abounds among our selves, will have reason  
 to exert the same passions for Christianity, as the *Jews*  
 had when they erected the Second Temple, and call'd  
 to mind the Glory of the First: The Prophet says,  
*that in their eyes it was in comparison as Nothing.* 'Tis Hag. 2. 3.  
 to be hoped that we have many *Zerubbabels* yet amongst  
 us, that have burning in their breasts a true Zeal for  
 God and Goodness, and that dare stand in the gap a-  
 gainst

gainst those Impieties, Heresies and Schisms, which now threaten the Ruin of Religion; there being never more need then at this season, when the great Enemy of mankind has so laid his Train by Atheists, Papists and Enthusiasts, as if he meant that no part or parcel of Christianity should escape him, that one stone should not be left upon another, but that it should be raz'd up to its very Foundations.

It would be a tedious and superfluous task to dilate upon those principles, which do *Uno Ictu* put an end to all Religion, viz. That the belief of a God and of Providence, of the Truth and Divinity of the Scriptures, of Heaven and Hell and the Resurrection, &c. are only the Scar-crows set up by cunning Black-coats that prophesie deceit and preach for a reward. And it might be thought a reproach and infamy to the Nation to say, that these blasphemies meet with no less publick and zealous a defense, than the contrary opinions do with the devoutest Advocates. A wickedness that can scarce be parallel'd in the most barbarous Ages of the World, all men endeavouring to uphold the Reputation of their Deities and their Religion, whatever obliquities they were guilty of in their practices, in not living up to the Rules of what they profess'd. But the formentioned principles have been so unanswerably justifi'd and defended by the courage and learning of some late † Writers, that the very gates of hell, the power and policies, the wit and arguings of Atheists and Devils are not able to shake and batter them.

† Sir Charles  
Wolfeley,  
Dr. Tillotson,  
Dr. Stilling-  
fleet,  
Mr. Tenison,  
&c.

That which this small Tract does chiefly aim at, is to represent the Ruins of Religion, rather as to its Circumstantials and Instruments, than as to its Vitals and



and Substance : And yet nothing shall be enlarged upon but what is of that concern and moment, that without a due reverence and regard to it, the very Foundations of all piety must be subverted.

: And in the first place, That which presents it self to the thoughts of all sober minds, is, how those Forms of wholsom words, the *Creed*, the *Lords Prayer*, and the *Decalogue* are generally disus'd and contemned by Dissenters, and look'd on to be as needless and superstitious as the *publick Liturgy* it self. There are few parochial Churches (unless such as are situated in great Towns and Cities, or where some Loyal Gentleman inhabits) but where there is such a solitariness in the Assemblies, that there will scarce be six persons present to hear the Recital of those Breviaries of Religion, most mens Devotion being confin'd to the hearing of a Sermon; and their great care is to train up their Children and Servants, not only to be ignorant of, but to throw Scorn upon those Sacred Rudiments. And conscientious Ministers, though they use all imaginable methods with their people to be instructed in some tolerable knowledge of their Duty, yet they find such opposition and discouragement, that they may almost with as much probability prevail with some Masters of Families to sacrifice their charge to *Moloch*, as prevail with them to frequent the Church, and be catechiz'd in the principles of Christianity. A Sermon from any ones lips gives a *Supersedens* to that Duty, though it signifie no more without it, than the building of an House without regarding the Foundation.

As for those that retain any affection for the publick Assemblies, and vouchsafe their visits to the Sanctuary,

Sanctuary, yet many of such enter Churches with such irreverent behaviour, and demean themselves in them with such irreligious rudeness, as if they came rather to defie God than to adore God. A wickedness of that magnitude, that if it be not check'd by some severe Law, will of it self make havock of Christian Holiness; it being impossible that any one should retain in his Soul worthy thoughts of God, that dare behave himself irreverently with his Body in that place, where he pretends to worship him. If we had no express Command in the Scriptures for the decent demeaning of our Bodies in Churches, yet the very light of natural Reason dictates it to be such an undoubted Duty, that it seems unquestionable, unless by such persons that have lost all sense of Goodness, and are delivered up to the distorted apprehensions of a reprobate mind. In this instance, the Turks may plead more in their own defence, than the generality of the *English* Nation. And if external reverence to their *Mosques* (which are the places of their publick Worship) declares their affection to *Mahomet*, they have far more love for him, than many *Englishmen* have for Christ. An uncivil or unhandson A<sup>c</sup>t (which modesty permits no one to mention, and should restrain others from doing, and that about private houses) is among them punishable with death, if done about the Walls of those places which are erected for the Honor and Service of their *Great Prophet*. There is no doubt, but that as much may be said for the *Place Where*, as the *Time When*, God is to be Worshipped: And 'tis as much the word of God, that we should *Reverence his Sanctuary*,

*as keep his Sabbaths.* But those who most zealously contend for the one, esteem it a piece of piety to be rude and irreverent in the other, shewing as little civility to Gods House, as those once did 2 *Kings* 2. unto Gods Prophet.

The Lords Day that had formerly so many volumes written for its Morality and Observation, is now generally scorn'd and neglected by Anabaptists, Libertines, &c. who in an open defiance to Christianity and the Churches Laws, designedly make choice upon that Day to engage in the most servile works and drudgeries. The Festivals of the Saints have met with a far worse fate, it being accounted Superstitious and ridiculous to praise God for their examples, which they are bound by all the ties of Christianity to imitate. We have reason to believe that the Christian Faith will be but short-liv'd amongst us, if we totally omit those things which preserve it in other places of the world. Now 'tis observ'd by a late ingenious † Writer, that in the *Greek and Armenian* Churches, its *Conservation is not to be attributed to any instance more, than to the strict observation of the Feasts and Fasts of their Churches.*

† Mr. Rycaut's  
Present State  
of the Ottoman  
Emp.  
p. 80.

But we cannot expect better from those persons, who make it part of their Religion to have their Souls so far debased, that they are so unlike Christians as to leave off to be *English-men*, retaining no Sentiments of love or honour either for the places of Gods publick Worship, or their own Native Country. What else mean the generality of Sectaries to follow the steps of *Julian*, who scoff'd at those places in which the *Galilean* (for so he call'd our Blessed Saviour) was worship'd. There is nothing more ordinary  
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in the mouths of Sectaries, than such expressions as these, "That they will freely pay to a Levie that is made to pull down Steeple-houses to mend the Highways, but will rather starve and rot in a Jail than contribute one farthing towards their reparation; and that the Kings last Declaration for Indulgence signifi'd nothing, unless he would command them to pull down Steeple-houses. A strange instance of mens debauched and perverted minds! viz. That Churches which have ever been esteem'd the Glory and Renown of *England*, should be wish'd by those persons that most highly pretend to Christianity to become ruinous heaps. This also may be farther aver'd, That most of our Barns and Stables in which we feed our beasts, are more cleanly and decent and in far better repair, than many of our Churches in *England*, in which we worship our God. That Prophecie of Sir *W. Rawleigh* hath met with too exact a completion: For speaking about *English* Sectaries, he says, *That all cost and care bestowed and had of the Church; wherein God is to be served and worshipped is accounted a kind of Popery, and as proceeding from an Idolatrous disposition: Insomuch as time would soon bring it to pass (if it were not resisted) that God would be turned out of Churches into Barns, and from thence again into Fields and Mountains and under the Hedges; and the offices of the Ministry (robb'd of all dignity and respect) be as contemptible as those places; all Order, Discipline and Church-government left to newness of opinion and mens fancies: yea and soon after as many kinds of Religions would spring up, as there are Parish-Churches within England: every contentious and ignorant person clothing his fancy with*

Hist. World.  
lib. 2. cap. 5.  
§. 1.

with the Spirit of God, and his imagination with the gift of revelation; insomuch, as when truth, which is but one, shall appear to the simple multitude, no less variable than contrary to it self, the faith of men will soon after dye away by degrees, and all Religion held in scorn and contempt. Which distraction gave a great Prince of Germany cause of this answer to those that perswaded him to become a Lutheran; Si me adjungo vobis, tunc condemnor ab aliis: Si me aliis adjungo, à vobis condemnor; quid fugiam, video; sed quid sequar non habeo: If I adjoyn my self to you, I am condemned by others; if I joyn with others, I am condemned by you: what I should avoid I see, but I know not what I should follow. God grant, that the fickleness of some persons, and the lukewarminess of others in matters of Religion, may not reduce them to the same straits.

Our wonder will be abated about the forementioned Instances, when both the Blessed Sacraments, which are the Badges and Tesseræ's of our Religion and the undoubted Institutions of Christ lye under as general a neglect and contempt, as any thing before specif'd. That of *Baptism* is not only deferr'd but deny'd to Thousands of Infants in this Nation, and that not only by Anabaptists, but others who make the whole Office the professed object of their Scoffs; having as mean an opinion of the Baptismal Waters, as *Naaman* the Syrian had for those of *Israel*, and shewing no more regard to the Souls of their children, than the Ostridge does unto her young. Parents that withhold their little ones from that Sacrament, do all they can to murder their Souls, if one Baptism be necessary (as it has alwayes been esteem'd in the Church of Christ) to the remission of sins. So that if the peo-

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ple of *England* are permitted to proceed in their neglects and contempts of Baptism, the cockle will soon overspread the wheat, and instead of Christians, our Towns and Villages will become the Herds of Heathens and Infidels. I omit to speak of those many Infants that are baptized in Seditious and Schismatical Conventicles, by which means they are accessory to Schism, and consequently their Baptism such, as that the former and better ages would have entertained many sad and fearful apprehensions concerning it, as also of those deluded Wretches, who are prevail'd with by the persuasion of their Preachers to renounce their Baptism, and receive it again by such abject persons, whom one of ordinary quality would (to use *Jobs* words) disdain to seat with the dogs of his Flock. I appeal to every considering Christian, how far many Christians in *England* imitate herein the Infidels in *Turky*, who never circumcise their Children till the Age of seven years and upwards; and then they do it by a Barber or Chirurgeon, it not being esteemed a matter appropriated to the office of the Emaum or Priest; for the Mahometan Believers make no such distinction as Clergy and Laity; for a man may cry upon the Steeple to day, and like their Pastor, be the first to lead his Congregation to their Prayers, and expound their Alchoran in the Pulpit; and next day be expell'd his Parish, & become free to any other secular employment or profession.

And those who have not absolutely renounced their profession, but continue in some measure to frequent the Church, yet most of these are so backward and negligent in coming to the *Holy Communion* (which is deservedly stiled by one, *The Principal office of Religious Assemblies*) that all the arguments and entreaties of Ministers cannot prevail with them to esteem it an indispensable

indispensible part of their Christian duty; but they rather think it a matter of choice and liberty, which according to their own pleasures they may ingage in or omit. And if by earnest entreaties and prudent insinuations, a Clergy-man can perswade some few of his people ( which in many Parishes are so few that more would in times past have communicated with a sick person in a private chamber ) at any of the three great *Festivals* of the Church, to commemorate the Passion of their Saviour, he is fain to provide Bread and Wine at his own charges, the Church-wardens refusing to contribute their endeavours in that matter, being treated with a strange kind of scorn and insolence, when they demand money to a *Levie* made for any Concern of the Church. There are few footsteps left of the ancient Christians, who in their receiving of the Holy Eucharist, never neglected to lay their Offerings or Sacrifices upon the Lords Table, out of which they made provision for the Sacrament, and gave relief unto the poor.

Pass we next to Marriage, which is so far from resembling the Union between Christ and his Church, that in this Age 'tis look'd on to be as ridiculous for the *Protestant* Laity, as 'tis esteem'd unlawful for the *Roman* Clergy. And he is reputed a wiser person that wasts his Fortune in keeping an imperious Whore, than another who marries a chaste Wife. And yet such an one to many Husbands becomes so troublesome and unpleasant in this lascivious and wanton Age, that in a few Months they forsake the Marriage-bed, and betake themselves to that of an Harlot, spending their own and their Wives Fortune in all manner of sensual impurities. Some regard not the



degrees of consanguinity, but assume a liberty to be joyn'd unto their own Flesh: Others (and those most *Sectaries*) despise the Solemnity and Rites of Marriage, relying upon each others bare words and godly meanings, which are presently alter'd and dissolv'd by poverty, passion, contentions, &c. and then they leave a Brood of Bastard-Slips to a wide World, to inherit the shame of their Parents and the curse of God.

Christian Burial is also under the same prescription; the Generality of *Sectaries* making that to be a mark of Saintship, which, before there was any such thing as the Christian Religion, was esteem'd the greatest disgrace of Humane Nature, and the infallible testimony of Gods severest wrath, *viz. To be buried with the Burial of an Ass.* And the omission of this decent Rite does perhaps give as much occasion to the *Atheist* to throw in our Teeth the disbelief of the Resurrection, as the *Socinian* had to think that we had embraced his Religion, when *Gloria Patri* was not used in the publick Worship.

And most of those who are *Excommunicated* for offending against the Sacred Offices of Religion, or any other Laws of the Church; that Sentence, which was in the purest times esteem'd precursory to the great Judgment of Christ, is so far from appearing dreadful, that by many persons 'tis wish'd for and desir'd: For there are few that are Excommunicated by the Church, but do first Excommunicate themselves. And that dreadful Sentence is seldom pursued any farther than an Exclusion from the Assemblies of Christian People; the Criminal fearing



no penalty from the civil Power, and the *Spiritual Courts* very much obstructed in the Execution of that Jurisdiction, wherewith they were formerly enabled for the correction of sin, and reformation of the Offender.

If the Author and Founder of Christianity be thus affronted in his Institutions and Worship, 'tis not to be expected that his Stewards and Ministers should meet with better entertainment, for why *should the Disciple be above his Master, or the Servant above his Lord?* Those of the *Clergy* have reason to bless God that they are not reduc'd to those calamities and hardships which their Predecessors endured in the reign of King *John*, when they were thrown out of the protection of his Laws and Scepter, and thereby exposed to all the injuries and violences that a malicious and rude multitude could act against them; some being butchered and robb'd, others imprison'd or forc'd to leave their native soil and livelyhoods, there being no respect or regard given either to their persons or professions. Whether the like storm may not overtake the *English Clergy* either in this or the succeeding Age, shall be left to others to presage. That it is not now out of the reach of danger, is evident from that scorn and contempt, that those are generally expos'd to, that enter into the Ministry. And which is yet worse, There are not a few that put the highest value upon themselves, and look upon it to be the most certain sign of Saintship and Grace, that they have hearts inclin'd to hate and despise a Minister. Nay things are come to this pass, that a Minister cannot faithfully do his duty, but he must disgrace himself and dis-oblige his people.

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To prove this, 'tis sufficient to speak of that indispensable obligation which lyes upon all Ecclesiastick persons ( that have a Cure of Souls ) to teach and maintain to the utmost of their learning and knowledge, four times in a year the Kings Power and Supremacy in matters Ecclesiastical. Now either Ministers must discharge their duty in this instance, or they must not. If they do not, they betray their trust, hazard Government, and expose themselves to the displeasure of God, as well as the severity of the Law. But on the other hand, if they square their Ministry by a Rule, and conscientiously attempt to set up loyalty in the hearts of their people, then they are loaded with those Appellatives of scorn, of being Formalists, Time-servers, and whatever else the malicious wit of disaffected persons can fix upon them. Nay, there are not a few that have forsaken the publick Assemblies upon this sole account, *That their Ministers do not preach up Jesus Christ, but the King.*

The same event happens if the Minister reads the whole Liturgy and Offices of the Church. Where there is not some Loyal Gentleman to over-awe the spirits of the Vulgar, things are come to that pass, that unless Clergy-men comply with their peoples humours, in omitting or mangling the Prayers of the Church, and making oblique reflections upon its Constitutions and Rites, and girding at the vices of their Governours in Church and State; in one word, unless they will disgrace their callings, wound their consciences, hazard the damnation of their own aswell as their peoples souls, by a sneaking compliance with their peoples humours, and

and by engaging in those wayes and designs, which are commonly destructive to Christian piety, aswel as publick order and peace, they first loose the affections of their people to their Persons and Function, and then their company in the Congregations.

The utmost ingenuity of the *Vulgar* is to cheat a Gentleman and the Parson. As for the last, He must be contented to part with his Livelyhood aswel as his Fame, if he will enjoy any peace in the Neighbourhood, where 'tis his lot to live. For whenever he appears in the vindication of his own or the Churches Rights, the Parishioners have this infallible method of Revenge, *viz.* To forsake his Ministry, and engage all their Friends to side with some factious Preacher, and never more to receive any instructions from his lips. There are few Tithes paid any farther than it pleases the humour of the people. For when the Minister is debarr'd of his dues; If he applies himself to any Court of the *Common Law*, there the remedy is worse than the disease, the success never countervailing the charges which attend the Suit: If to *Ecclesiastick Courts*, the weakness (not to say as Mr. *Thorndike* does the scandal) of *their Jurisdictions becomes a popular Plea to strip the Clergy of their whole maintenance.* They fear no Excommunication, that withhold Rights from a Minister. And (I know not upon what encouragement) do as little value the Civil as the Spiritual effect of that dreadful Sentence. To conclude this Particular, what with a total denial of Tithes by some, and a partial precarious payment of them by others, and expensive Law-Suits to recover and maintain the Churches

Rights;

Forbearance  
of Penalties,  
109.

Rights; what with unequal Taxes and Town-Rates laid upon Clergy-men far above any other Inhabitants; the generality of them have nothing left to buy Books, or maintain Hospitality, nothing left either for present provision or future subsistence.

If it be said, that the Cause of all this misery and contempt is to be ascrib'd to the Clergy themselves, that 'tis the ignorance of their minds, the cowardise of their spirits, and the viciousness of their lives that expose them to the forementioned mischiefs: There is no doubt but there is too much truth in this objection. Those words of that great Scholar and good man deserve serious thoughts; *It must be acknowledged that the debauches of the Clergy are come to that height, that, till they be reformed, Reformation is not duly pretended against the See of Rome*; I will presume to add, till then, Schism will never be suppress'd, nor true piety and goodness flourish and be reviv'd. The ignorances and immoralities of some Clergy-men are too notorious to be mentioned. But those are not more mischievous to the Church, than such are, who for filthy lucre-sake pretend conformity to the Churches Laws, but to ease themselves and humour the people, make their practises contradict their *Subscriptions*, reading the Prayers imperfectly and by halves, and that in such a rustick and indecent manner, and with so little zeal, gravity and devotion, that many of the people who dislike the publick Liturgy, are in some measure excusable, since their Ministers expose the Offices of the Church as much to their hatred and contempt, as once their elder Brethren did the *Offerings of the Lord*.

Mr. Thorndike  
Forbear. Penult. 110.

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As for the Generality of the Clergy of *England*, perhaps there was never any in the whole world that did exceed them in all those ornaments of worth and vertue, that might challenge the love, reverence and admiration of their people. And those who are otherwise qualifi'd, let them lye under the load of their enemies malice, and their own guilts. But let the defects and immoralities of particular persons be never so notorious, yet it ill becomes the wisdom and honour of Authority, to permit the whole Ministry to be expos'd to the scorn and insolencies of unreasonable men, because of the faults which may too justly be charged upon particular persons. For that would be to punish the righteous with the wicked, and make void the Institutions of God, because of the sins and infirmities of men,

The most implacable Enemies of the Conforinable Clergy will acknowledge, that there are some of that Function, who are laborious and studious in their places, and faithful in their trust: And these ought either to be protected in the discharge of their duty, or acquitted from the obligation of it. For if they meet with no other reward for their Conscientious conformity to the Churches Laws, in reading the Liturgy of the Church, asserting the necessity of Regal power, and the Subjects obedience, but the scorn of Schismaticks and the apostacy of their people, it will in a short time sadden their spirits, weaken their hands, and in the end cut the sinews of Government, and render Monarchy as despicable as the Priesthood; to whose Reasonings

and Harangues it has formerly ow'd as much its safety and honour, as to the Souldiers Sword, and the Lawyers Robes. And it may not be unworthy of regard, that those very methods now us'd to make the Clergy contemptible, did not many years since bring a King to a Scaffold, dishonour and beggary upon the Nobility and Gentry, consternation and slavery upon all Orders and Degrees of men in the whole Nation, except such as were Vassals to the Usurper, and the Instruments of his Tyranny and Malice.

It were to be wish'd, that those scandals which some of the Ministry are too guilty of, and which no Church was ever yet freed from, might meet with a more open shame and punishment, than has hitherto been inflicted upon those who are Criminals. But the very ignorances and indiscretions of the meanest part of the Clergy is tolerable and praise-worthy, if put in the ballance with the choicest abilities of those *Lay-Libertines*, that invade the Ministerial Office, and break through all the Bounderies of Law and Order. For whoever considers what *Faces plebeæ* do now undertake to gather Churches, and expound the Scriptures, he will conclude that *Jeroboams* Priests were Scholars and Gentlemen in comparison of such persons. Their ignorance, non-sense, rudeness, and impudence is so insufferable, in pretending to preach the Oracles of Life, that they poison our very Antidotes, and make Gods Word a *Felo de se*, and to speak against every thing but what they have a mind to. Insomuch that there are now such prodigies of error and madness, which have taken possession

session of the minds of the *Vulgar*, that they render Christianity hateful and ridiculous to all persons, that have not their souls ballanc'd with true goodness and wisdom, and in the end will make the *English* Commonalty as bad or worse than the wild *Irish*. For to be religiously frantick or seditious, renders men incapable of rational arguings and instructions. Experience will inform any one that has made the observation, That those who are accustomed to believe lies, and to tread in the paths of Faction and Schism, are as unmanageable and as difficultly reduced to peace and truth, as those persons are to piety and vertue, that run to an excess of riot, and are habituated to vice and wickedness. Former Heathens in worshipping their Idol-Deities, had ever their Superstitions guided by a Rule;

*Semper agatne rogat, nec nisi jussus agit.*

Aul. Gell.

But the Conventicles in this Nation (that have Mechanicks and Plough-men for their inspired Preachers and Rulers) have no other rule than their own wild and extravagant fancies, set on fire by Enthusiastick raptures and pretences to the Spirit. And when their Brains are heated, they do not only vent noise and non-sense, but wrest and distort the sacred Scriptures, to defend their idle dreams and horrid blasphemies, against the Analogy of Faith and the Rule of good Manners, aswel as the peace of the Nation, and the honour of Government. So that if there be no stop put to this Spirit, our posterity



rity, if not we ourselves, will be presently brought to the state of the ten Tribes, *i. e.* to be a *Lo-ammi*, quite unchurch'd and rejected by God. For what else can be expected, if every Sect-master may without controule with his false wares, like the plague, walk at noon-day, and bring over multitudes of well-meaning people, as well as others that own no Religion, into a fellowship of his own infection.

Innumerable have been the Pamphlets, which have appeared in the world against the inconvenience and illegality of penal Laws in matters of Religion; the Authors of which have alwayes hid the substantial merits of the question concerning Toleration of contrary Religions in an establish'd Church, under the *Paralogisms* or specious reasonings of Oratory concerning forcing of mens consciences, the necessity of Indulgence and Liberty in the present postures of affairs amongst us, the great danger of exasperating the numerous Sects in the Nation, &c. But certainly, *Christian Authority* (they are the words of a most learned man now in Heaven) *is obliged to do those good that are under its charge, against their wills.* And the weakness of the Kingdom is to be ascribed to the variety of its Religions. For Religion is the great Cement and Tie of mens affections; and when they cannot agree concerning that, they will never unite their counsels and strength to pursue any honourable End for the Publick Good. Besides, those who urge such objections do very much erre, either in not knowing, or not believing the Scriptures. For whoever believes the Authority of those



those sacred Records, must also yield his Assent to the Truth of the Christian Religion: And whoever does that, must also believe that the Divine Providence is most concern'd and exercis'd in preserving Christianity; And if so, he must yield, that this Providence will declare its wrath and vengeance from Heaven against those Councils and Designs, which under pretence of securing the publick peace do deflower the best of Religions, exposing it to a deluge of Heresies and Schisms, and the derision of Atheists and Infidels. Nothing can be more dishonourable and unchristian than to attain good ends by unrighteous means. And God will mock and insatuate that policy and craft that lays trains for the ruin of his Truth. *Jeroboams* Family was not established upon the Throne of *Israel*, when he made use of his Regal power, in matters Ecclesiastical, to erect and tolerate methods of worship subservient to his own (though mistaken) interest against Gods express will and directions. And indeed to deliver up Christian Religion, and a well establish'd Church, to the wills of Atheists, Enthusiasts and Papists, on purpose to preserve them peaceable, and free from offering violence to Government, is such another method, as was once used by the *Babylonians*, when they sold their fairest Virgins for Slaves, to put off those that were decrepid and deform'd. In one word, Declarations to indulge all Dissenters in Religion, viz. such as are forsaken by God and Reason, as well as those which are more sober and moderate, are but like Bushes, which may perhaps secure a Traveller dry in a small shower, but if it be

a continuing storm, he will be annoy'd more with the droppings of that shelter, than if he were expos'd to the open air.

We have fresh experience how short-liv'd, *Declarations* are in the affairs of Religion, unless they be enacted into the Sanction of a Law. But what possible Law can be made for those *Congregations* in this Kingdom, that assert themselves to have the Law in their own power to be *Socinians, Arrians, &c.* and to preach and propagate the vilest errors that ever yet came from the bottomless pit? A popular Religion will unavoidably introduce and end in a popular Government. For the freedom which incites men to make their pretences to the Spirit the foundation of dissenting from an establish'd Church, will encourage and provoke them at last to rebel against that Prince, who indulged them that liberty. And perhaps, when the Zealots for Indulgence are well thought on, there will be found very few of them, besides 1. such as are Papists, who act against their own principles; for if they sate at the stern of Government, they would never allow that liberty to the Sectaries, which they now plead for in their behalf. It is well known who conducted the Head of all the Sectaries in *England* to his Majesty, immediately before the Declaration for Indulgence appeared in the open light; or 2. such kind of Royalists, who have actually fought, or willingly submitted to the *Good Old Cause*. These two are the great Sticklers for Liberty of Conscience. And certainly a better cause than that is, would be suspected by having such Advocates.

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Let as many Books be written for Toleration as there are Volumes in the *Vatican*, these truths must be granted; *viz.* That there can be no stability of Government in *England*, till there be a settlement of Religion; no settlement of Religion, but by uniting the affections of those persons that live under the same form of Government, (for any thing is best preserved, when 'tis most united) no uniting of mens affections, but by an unity of Religion. That's the main Band of Unity, and if that Staff be broken, mens affections will grow wider and wider, till they list themselves into Parties and Sects; and when that is done, the sinews of Government will wax weak and languid; and that, not only for that reason given by that admirable Historian, *Every Subdivision in the Cause of Religion is a strong weapon in the hand of the contrary Party*; but also because every Sect will endeavour the extirpation of that Sect which is above it, and make the destruction of that the ground of its own advancement, and its own advancement the means of the others destruction. This we have seen evident in our own Nation, where all Sects and Parties were as much (and they are so still) divided in Doctrines, Principles, Modes of Worship, and Forms of Government from themselves, as they were from the Church of *England*, against which they bended all their councils and power, and did as implacably hate One another, as they did Episcopacy. And when they had by their united endeavors destroyed the Church, they fell foul upon another, and so would have continued (if the Divine Providence had not interposed) till the strongest had taken all.

Hist. Conc.  
Trent. p. 49.

The

*A seasonable  
Discourse  
showing the  
necessity of  
maintaining  
the Establish'd  
Religion in op-  
position to Po-  
pery.*

The zeal and learning of that Author who ap-  
pear'd in the behalf of the establish'd Religion a-  
gainst Popery is highly commendable, as well as his  
Discourse was seasonable and rational. But might  
not most or all those Heads of Arguments which are  
by him enlarg'd on against the *Romanists*, be applyed  
and mannaged with as much success of reason against  
those Factions, who crumble Religion into as many  
Sects, as once *Democritus* did the World into Atoms?  
Have not our *English* Enthusiasts (considering the time  
of their growth and reign) debauch'd Christianity,  
affronted Government, destroy'd Kings, deprived  
Christians of the offices and comforts of Religion,  
and that only, for asserting the just Rights, and per-  
forming the indispenfible duties to God and their So-  
veraign? Have they not done violence to all manner  
of Laws, to uphold and erect their own Factions?  
Have they not taken away mens lives, names, liber-  
ties, estates, and expos'd their Families to shame  
and beggary, without so much as an *Inquisition*?  
Have not *Committee-men*, *Major-Generals*, and *HIGH-  
Courts of Justice* been as dreadful and fatal to *English*  
*Protestants*, as any *Inquisition* in *Spain* or *Italy*? May not  
idleness as much increase and grow upon us by Lay-  
preachers that are continually seducing men from  
their Callings, to hear their Canting, and observe  
dayes of Humiliation, as by Abby-Lubbers, begging  
Friars and Monks, who live upon the sweat and la-  
bors of other people? For men to be only useless  
in humane Society, 'tis not so prejudicial to Go-  
vernment, as that temper of spirit, which renders  
them impatient of Laws and Rebellions against Au-  
thority.

thority. For zeal to do mischief is more injurious to the publick peace, than supineness in doing nothing. And if popery should ever be admitted into *England*, the King would receive in a Foreign or Civil War, as much aid from cloister'd Monks as from Sectaries, who generally believe all war unlawful, except that which they themselves carry on against their own Prince and Country.

It must be granted that the Principles of Papists and Sectaries are equally levell'd against the safety of Kings and Government: but there is a wide difference in their exerting of them: for this is beyond all Controversie (notwithstanding what the forecited Author mentions) that the Lay-papists of *England*, i. e. those of the refined sort, suffered very deeply for their loyalty, and took joyfully the losing of their lives and liberties, as well as their goods and estates, for the Royal Family. And no doubt but this was owing rather to the generousness of their Natures, as they were *English-men*, than to the vital constitution of their Faith, as they were Papists. So that it concerns all in Authority, not to trust them too far, but to consider that mens natures are variable, and that it will be unsafe to subscribe to the Popes Religion, unless they resolve to submit to the Popes Tyranny. However, the *English* Papist, for his courage and loyalty the last war, deserves to be recorded in the *Annals* of Fame and History. And perhaps this may not be unworthy of notice, that when ever the *Usurper*, or any of his Instruments of Bloud and Sycophancy (who were all profess'd Sectaries) resolv'd to take away the Life or Estate of a Papist, it was his

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Loyalty,

Vid. *Thosnd.*  
 Forbear. p.  
 156.

Loyalty, not his Religion, that expos'd him to their Rapine and Butcheries. There are more of the Kings Subjects in *England*, than what are listed under the banner of the *Roman Church*, who think themselves discharg'd from their Allegiance upon the account of Religion. And therefore such persons in point of justice, should have the same penalties imposed on them, to which Papists are now lyable by the Laws of this Nation. Neither have the Principles of Sectaries a less malignant aspect towards Christian Holiness, than those of Papists. The Pope of *Rome* challenges to himself the priviledge of being infallible: What less does the Sectary, when he sayes that the Holy Ghost dictates to him matter and words in the performance of all Religious Duties, and that he does personally dwell and make his abode in his heart? 'Tis no hard thing to prove, that a private spirit advanc'd above, or made parallel to the Scriptures, is more prejudicial to Christianity than Tradition, or the largest power that was ever yet assumed by the Pope. Alas! for one infallible old Gentleman at *Rome*, we have thousands of *Hotspurs* in *England*, that pretend to more of the Divine perfections than ever he did. For if the Holy Ghost does personally *in-dwell* in Sectaries, than they are personally possess'd with all the glorious Attributes of the Godhead. Which is more prejudicial to Protestantism, to affirm there is no Church of *England*, or to say that the *Roman Church* is the Catholick Church? And which does most prejudice Religion, the unlimited power of a Foreiner to give Laws to this Church, or the No Right and Power to the King to give

give Laws to it, although within his own dominions? There is no person that has any sober apprehensions of Religion, but would rather hold communion with a Church that has Laws, than with that which has none; nay, which makes it essential to Christianity, that it should have none; for so our Sectaries do, when they separate from this Church upon this account, That it is settled by the Laws of the Land. And here I cannot but present the Reader with those words of Mr. Rycant in his fore-mentioned History of the *Ottoman Empire*, by which it will appear who was the pattern and prophet of our *English* Sectaries in their Reformation of Religion in these Kingdoms.

*The Musti* (says that ingenuous person) *hath no Jurisdiction over the Emaums, as to the good Order or Government of the Parishes, nor is there any Superiority or Hierarchy as to rule amongst them; every one being Independent, and without controule in his own Parish, excepting his subjection in civil and criminal Causes to the chief Magistrates; and considering the manner of their designation to the Religious Office, the little difference between the Clergy and Laity, and the manner of their single Government in Parochial Congregations, may not unaptly seem to square with the Independency of England, from which original pattern and example, our Sectaries and Phanatick Reformers appear to have drawn their copy.* Pag. 109.

The Papiſts withhold the cup from the Laity in the blessed Eucharist: The Sectaries deny the whole of that Sacrament to all who cannot give certain signs of their conversion, and their being in a state of Grace and Favour with God: nay, they make the



whole of both the Sacraments invalid to Salvation, by being administred in a state of Schism, and by those persons, that have no more Authority or Right to assume that power, than *Uzza* had to lay hold upon the Ark, or *Nadab* and *Abihu* to offer the strange fire.

The Papists lead their people in ignorance and darkness: but Monks and Friars are as learned as Millars and Taylors; and the Latin Service as intelligible as mystical Non-sense; and the Prayers in an unknown Tongue as edifying (and less injurious to Christianity) than bold blasphemies, and those expressions which are the very derision of Devotion.

The Doctrine of the *Resurrection* will sooner receive its Ostracism by the omission of the Rites of Burial, than by praying for the dead. And the Belief of one *Catholick Church* and *Communion of Saints*, will sooner be destroy'd by the Independency of Churches, than if they all truckled under the See of *Rome*: And to direct our Devotions to the blessed Virgin and Saints departed, is not so displeasing unto God, nor dishonourable and injurious to Religion, as to pray for blood-shed and revenge, for the success of Rebels, the growth of Schism, and the rooting up of an establish'd Church. And the Idolatry of the Papists will be as excusable at the great Day of accounts, as the irreverent rudeness and superstitious sowerness of the Sectary. Sin is more encourag'd by making the condition of its pardon to depend upon a strong fancy and belief that it is pardoned, than by making it absolutely to depend upon



upon the power of a Priest. In one word, the gross Usurpation and Invasion of the Priestly Office by Sectaries to erect Churches, ordain, baptize, administer the Holy Eucharist, preach, excommunicate, &c. throws more dirt upon the Christian Religion, than the grossest errors in the Roman Church.

These Instances make it appear to any unprejudic'd mind, That Fanaticism is as fatal to Christianity and Government as Popery. And this may be farther affirm'd, That the growth and increase of Popery in this Kingdom is chiefly to be ascribed to Sectaries. It was almost fifty years since the Jesuits acted the Puritans in Speech and Gesture, as may be seen in Mr. *Rushworths Historical Collections*. And that has been the method of the *Romish* Emissaries ever since, viz. To put on the garb and habit of preaching Zealots, to get into Schismatical Conventicles, and there assume all the shapes of Independency, Anabaptism, Quakerism, &c. to suit their Doctrines to the humor and opinions of their several Auditories; and thereby to abuse the Scriptures, to beguile and pervert unstable souls, and whine them into fears, jealousies and discontents, and perswade them that licentiousness of opinion and practise is Christian Liberty, and bold Rebellion against publick Laws is inspired Saintship. So that for Authority to stop the growth, or root out the profession of Popery in this Nation, and yet to permit and connive at Conventicles, and indulge Sectaries in their great *Diana*, Liberty of Conscience, is the same thing as if a Pilote, when in danger of perishing, should

should employ his Sea-men to pump the water out of his Ship, but take no manner of care to stop the leaks through which the water was convey'd. *It is in vain* (says D'Avila) *to cut off the body of a Tree, how high and lofty soever, if there be any quick roots left, which may send forth new sprouts.*

The Romanist has been upon the rising ground these many years: but this advantage was given him by the Sectary. For the farther he departed from the Church of England, the larger was the prospect of the Papal Emiliaries. And indeed, if the violent Dissenters in this Nation had retain'd any veneration for *Protestantism*, they would not have given such advantage to Popery, by forsaking upon no manner of pretence the publick Assemblies, and setting up their Calves at *Dan* and *Bethel* against all Law and Reason. Conventicles alone would have been sufficient to have destroy'd the establish'd Religion without that bold and untimely zeal, which the Jesuite has lately us'd amongst us. The Sectaries would have done his work to his hand without any of those daring attempts, in which he has met a disgraceful repulse. If the Jesuite had only trodden in his old beaten road, of proselyting the Debauches and Atheists of the Nation (for let any man name one honest and serious person that has turn'd Papist since the Kings return) and preaching in Schismatical Assemblies, &c. These endeavours would have effected his business; for they would have kept us divided, and at a religious enmity (which of all is most implacable) among our selves. The Consequent of which would have been like that which *Vespasian* observ'd among the *Jews*, when he would not  
 attacke

attaque them by any hostile and war-like assault, but chose rather to permit them to fall by their own hands, and perish in their own animosities.

And that which may be presented as a farther argument to Authority, to attempt something towards the suppressing or discountenancing of Sectaries, is, that no acts of mercy or indulgence shew'd to them, did ever yet oblige their natures, satisfy their demands, or appease their discontents. The late *Declaration* gave the largest liberty that ever yet was granted by any Prince unto dissenting Subjects. But that was trampled on and made insignificant by the greatest part of Independents and Anabaptists, as well as Quakers, who pursu'd their malice to the very Fountain of Mercy and Goodness, erecting their Conventicles, and choosing their Preachers without any leave or licence ask'd or granted from Authority. So that it may be truly affirm'd, That this one thing has been most obstinately pursu'd by Sectaries ever since the miraculous Restauration of his Majesty, *viz.* To bring things to an extremity, and then to use that extremity (which they themselves caus'd) so immodestly, as to make it the reason of their own unlimited and unreasonable demands, which they have prosecuted with so resolv'd an importunity, that would admit of no denial, though their proposals tended to Christianities and the Kingdoms ruin.

Would to God those weighty words of a martyr'd Prince were seriously laid to heart. *Take heed ofabetting any Factions, or applying to any publick Discriminations in matters of Religion, contrary to what is your judgment, and the Church well sask'd; your partial adhering,*

EIKON  
B A S. C. 27.  
To the Prince  
of Wales.

adhering, as Head to any one side, gains you not so great advantages in some mens hearts (who are prone to be of their Kings Religion) as it loseth you in others; who think themselves and their profession first despised, then persecuted by you: Take such a course as may either with calmness and charity quite remove the seeming differences and offences by impartiality, or so order affairs in point of power, that you shall not need to fear or flatter any Faction. For if ever you stand in need of them, or must stand to their courtesie, you are undone. The Serpent will devour the Dove. You may never expect less of loyalty, justice or humanity, than from those who engage in Religious Rebellion: Their interest is alwayes made Gods; under the colours of piety, ambitious policies march, not only with greatest security, but applause, as to the populacy: You may hear from them Jacob's voice, but you shall feel they have Esau's hands. Let nothing seem little or despicable to you in matters which concern Religion, and the Churches peace; so as to neglect a speedy reforming and effectual suppressing Errors and Schisms, which seem at first as a hand-breadth, by Seditious spirits, as by strong winds, are soon made to cover and darken the whole Heaven.

If it be urg'd, that the Factions are too strong and potent to be dealt wihal at this time especially; it being dangerous to exasperate enemies at home, while we have war abroad; 'Tis answered first, That it seems dishonourable to the great and wise Assembly, aswel as his Sacred Majesty, that the *English* Sectary should have such a Devil that should break through all chains and fetters, and that no Law or Authority could

could manicle or restrain him. Devils as bad and boisterous have been tam'd and reduc'd to order in past Ages by former Princes and their Parliaments; witness what was done by *Edward* the Sixth, and *Queen Elizabeth*, of famous memories. Besides, what is gain'd on the one hand will be lost on the other. For the hearts and hands of all loyal Subjects that have born the heat and burthen of the day, will wax faint and feeble, if the Tabernacles of Atheists, Schismaticks and Rebels prosper, and are permitted to lord it over oppress'd Truth and Loyalty. It was the saying of a great \* States-man to *Queen Elizabeth*, *That 'tis the poyson of all Government, when the Subject thinks the Prince doth any thing more out of fear than favour. And therefore the Romans would rather abide the utmost extremities, than by their Subjects to be brought to any conditions.* And in his Advice to that Princess, speaking about the Factions then Predominant in *England*, he has these words, *To make them contented absolutely, I do not see how your Majesty either in conscience will do, or in policy may do it, since you cannot without discontenting your faithful Subjects; and to fasten an unreconciled love with the losing of a certain love, is to build a house with the sale of lands. And to make them half content and half discontent, methinks carries with it as deceitful a shadow of reason as may be, since there is no pain so small, but if we can cast it off we will; and no man loves one the better for giving him the Bastinado, though with never so little a cudgel.* But the course of the most wise and politick and best grounded State hath ever been to make an assuredness of Friend-

\* The Lord  
Treasurer  
Bulleigh.

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ship,

*ship, or to take away all power of enmity.* Alas! for State-physicians to delay the purging of the Body-politick for fearing of exasperating it's corrupt humors, may indeed for a short season secure its health, and keep it fresh and lively, but the humors will stir at last, and they will no sooner move but they'l rage, and in spite of all remedies make death certain and inevitable. Wo to that Government that wants power or resolution to make it self obey'd: for it must be needs short-liv'd, when the Superiour lives in suspicion of the Inferiour, that ought to live in fear of him.

This is thought the critical time of securing the *Protestant* Religion, it being now come to its vertical point. There is very little time left either to palliate or put off our grievances; they will admit of no adjournments or delays, but must be speedily remedied, or we ruined. *Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep, will bring want and misery upon us as an armed man:* And then the united wisdom and power of his Majesty and his great Council, will not be able to put any bounds to mens lusts, or stop that deluge of Confusion, that will overflow the *English Israel*.

It is from this Parliament, that future Ages as well as that which is present, expect happiness or infelicity. And the security of Religion is the proper Honor and Inheritance of Parliaments. And nothing can defend that but an extirpation of Heresie and Schism; and of all Heresies, Enthusiasm or Fanaticism, which like the plague in the body, converts all supplies into its own malignant humor, and thereby renders the patient desperate and incurable.

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It is well known who it was, that chose rather to wear  
*a crown of Thorns with his Saviour, than to exchange*  
*that of Gold for one of Lead, whose embased flexibi-*  
*leness would be forc'd to bend and comply to the various and*  
*oft contrary dictates of any Factions; when instead of*  
*reason and publick concernments, they obtrude nothing*  
*but what makes for the interest of parties, and flows from*  
*the partialities of private wills and passions.*

E I K O N  
 B A Σ. C. 6.

But if God in his infinite and wise Providence should so order it, that those who are the Guardians of Protestantism, the Props and Pillars of the Nations happiness, should ever be left to the giddiness of a deluded reason or perverted understanding; so as first to believe error, and take false measures of the Kingdoms safety and welfare; and then manage the publick councils and concerns according to those misapprehensions, then welcome *Rome* or *Munster*, Idolatry or Confusion.

But 'tis the hope and confidence of all good men, that God will never forsake his Majesty or his Great Council, by delivering them up to such distorted apprehensions of things in sacred or civil concerns, but that he has call'd the most honourable Assembly of Parliament for such a time as this; and that they will engage and employ all their power and interests to do something for Christianity, which, like the man that fell among Thieves between *Jerusalem* and *Jericho*, is wounded and half dead. *If there be a King in Israel*, why should every One be permitted to do that which is seemly in his own eyes? There is not a Church upon Earth (*Amsterdam* not excepted) that does by a publick act of Grace allow and indulge an indifferency of



all Religions; but they are still subject to the military power, which suppresses or permits them according as profit arises from such contrary methods of Policy and Government. And perhaps it may be more rational and safe to tolerate upon the Kings Highways a company of Robbers and Out-laws, than an open profession of all Religions in any regular society; unless it can be prov'd that mens purses are of more worth than their souls, and that the peace of a Nation is not so much endangered by seditious Sectaries as Thieves. Let no true Christian *Englishman* therefore halt between two opinions, but if *God be God, follow him, if Baal, follow him.*

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F I N I S.